

Testimony of Sally Ryder at Public Hearing on SRP

One of our family's ancestors came to a very rural Newington in 1794 and bought several farms for his sons. Two of these farms are still being worked and this farmland is partly responsible for the "rural" character of Newington today. Much of Newington was taken in the 1950s for Pease Air Force Base but our farm, now in the Newington Historic District, was saved by its proximity to what was then the center of town. At that time our father was forced to grant a utility easement across our fields for a power line formerly on property taken by the air base. This utility easement is on the proposed route for the SRP line.

Our father worked the farm until his death and ingrained in us at an early age that our land would never become house lots. In 2005 we sold the development rights and put the land in a permanent agricultural easement with very specific terms that the valuable soils could not be disturbed or removed.

We first heard of the SRP project in 2015 at a public meeting to discuss alternate routes. We were shocked and dismayed to hear that all of the alternate routes had already been ruled out!

We believed that location in a historic district protected against the intrusion of high voltage transmission lines and Eversource soon assured us that they would put the lines underground. But we knew this would violate the terms of our agricultural easement. By preventing both overhead and underground lines through our farmland we thought we could stop Eversource from using their preferred route. Eversource then threatened us that they could still put the lines overhead through our farm - and the homes on Hannah Lane, attempting to pit neighbor against neighbor.

The holders of the agricultural easement said the document could be amended - but that would be approved by the Natural Resources Conservation Service only if it resulted in an overall improvement to the

farmland. So we worked with them to define terms acceptable to the NRCS and to Eversource. This unfortunate amendment will become effective only if the current route of the SRP line is approved. Thus we have made a tentative deal with the devil.

However, based on our experience dealing with Eversource over the past three years, we do not trust them! We do not want those lines overhead and we do not want them underground! We implore you to put those lines somewhere else!